Vol. II.—No. 33. MANCHESTER, Saturday, March 27. Price One Penny.

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THE SPHINX.

A JOURNAL OF CRITICISM AND HUMOUR.

REMINISCENCES OF THE STAGE IN MANCHESTER.

MANAGERS AND ACTORS.

WHEN the old Theatre Royal in Fountain Street was burnt down, the company did not immediately disperse. Some of the leading performers had engagements offered to them at once, but as others had lost all they possessed in the fire, the whole of the company, with that *esprit-de-corps* and liberality which is characteristic of the profession, stuck together for a short time, and proceeded to give dramatic readings, recitations, and entire scenes from favourite comedies, accompanied with songs. The only building available for the purpose happened to be the old Mechanics' Institution, and, as the theatre of that building was shaped exactly like a very deep well, and the stage was about the size of a small parlour, the performances, although highly successful, were more novel than imposing. The audience in the gallery had a splendid view of the crowns of the actors' heads, with the boards of the stage for a background. To those who occupied the front seats of the dress circle or pit, or whatever it was, the circumstance of finding themselves within a yard or two of Sir Peter Teazle, Joseph and Charles Surface, and Lady Teazle, going through the screen scene, had a singular effect, and many for the first time in their lives felt themselves, as it were, behind the scenes. Mr. Bass's reading of Bottom the weaver, and Mr. H. Bedford's comicalities, convulsed the audience with laughter, and the entertainments accomplished their purpose, in raising a sum of money sufficient to assist those who required help until they got employment elsewhere. Subsequently the company dispersed, some going to London, some to Liverpool and other places. Mr. Knowles, the lessee of the old theatre, lost no time, but bought forthwith the Wellington Rooms in Peter Street, which were at once demolished, and the present Theatre Royal built upon their site.

The new Theatre opened September 29th, 1845, with Douglas Jerrold's new comedy of *Time Works Wonders*, and a representation of Her Majesty's state ball which had just been held at Buckingham Palace. A few members of the old company were re-engaged, among others Miss Emmeline Montague, Mrs. Horsman, Mr. Charles Pitt, Mr. W. Davidge, and Mr. L. S. Thompson. Mr. Butler, the tragedian, had died a few months previously, and his place was supplied by Mr. Graham, from Drury Lane. Mr. Roxby, who had gone to London, did not resume the management, the proprietor himself giving more attention to it than he had previously done, and Mr. H. J. Wallack, a veteran and experienced actor from London, occupied the post of stage-manager. There were besides a few good new performers—Mr. Saunders, the comedian, and his sister, and Miss Rebecca Isaacs and Mr. E. L. Hime, the vocalists, but the absence of Mr. Roxby and other light comedians was a great loss. Mr. Bass also had left, and Corrie, the new comedian, was a poor substitute for little Munyard, who, after having got himself into a precious mess by marrying a second wife while his first was alive, had afterwards obtained an engagement at the Adelphi in London, where he remained some years.

Notwithstanding the curiosity attendant upon the opening of the new theatre, the performances were not particularly successful. The appearance of the theatre was fresh and brilliant, but it never has been, and we doubt if it ever will be, a comfortable theatre. Like the Mechanics' Institution before mentioned, it is shaped like a deep well, and owing to the pit being carried beneath the boxes, the dress circle is too elevated, and it, with the tier above, and the two galleries, are crowded into each other, so that on full nights the audience is either nearly stifled, or exposed to chilling draughts. The pit too is draughty, and the stalls occupy so much space that its frequenters are jammed back under the boxes, and crowded together like sheep in a pen, frequently when the stalls and dress circle are not one-third full. We may avail ourselves of this opportunity of expostulating with managers on the little regard they pay to the comfort of the audience. We don't mean to blame the management of the Theatre Royal more than that of most other theatres. In this country they are nearly all equally shortsighted, thoughtless, and niggardly, about arrangements in front of the curtain. Currents of air come from the lower regions underneath the pit, and counter currents flow through doors and apertures, striking into the necks and shoulders of the audience with the force and persistence of a douche-bath. The means of ingress are abominable, and of egress still worse. It makes one shudder to contemplate the contingency of a fire or other disaster. The amount of space occupied by the stalls is, we submit, a grievance, and we verily believe a loss to the exchequer. The seats in the pit are jammed together so closely that the very fact of sitting for a length of time becomes torture. We know scores and scores of people who seldom if ever go to the play, entirely from the discomforts to which they are subjected. When the Prince's Theatre opened, a novel plan, of which some fuss was made, was adopted, by dividing the pit seats into compartments, securing so much room for each person. This was an excellent plan, and the occupants could sit with some comfort, but the divisions, slight as they were, have all been removed, and the pit frequenters are reduced to the usual state of squeezing, discomfort, and misery. Another source of annoyance is the noise caused by people coming in late, after the performance has begun, and with great clamping and creaking boots, hurrying along the aisles and lobbies. Why not lay down matting, or the india-rubber and gutta-percha material used in the law courts and in the American theatres? But we despair of such innovations and improvements, and need not further dwell upon the subject,

The opening performances of the new theatre were not altogether propitious. It was felt at once that the company had deteriorated collectively, and did not work together with that smoothness which actors who understand each other invariably do. Old play-goers, and the players themselves, felt that things were not going so smoothly and satisfactorily as they had anticipated. Nevertheless, some

novelties were brought out which were tolerably successful. A new comedy of Boucicault's, *Old Heads and Young Hearts*, had a run, as also had a very amusing comic drama entitled *The Sheriff of the County*. Mr. Wallack was an acquisition, but unfortunately his memory was treacherous, and he required the constant aid of the prompter. Some of Shakspeare's plays were revived, the two tragedians alternating leading parts; but Mr. Charles Pitt, who had previously been a great favourite, and in fact remained so, began to fall off in his acting and became a confirmed mannerist. He was a handsome young man at that time, and in such parts as Benedict, Orlando, and Alessandro Massaroni the Brigand, his performances were unexceptionable. His best part, however, was the Duke of Aranza, in *The Honeymoon*, and, as he was a perfect cormorant for applause, it was amusing to see with what gusto he delivered the clap-trap speech—"The man who lays his hand upon a woman, save in the way of kindness, is a villain whom 'twere gross flattery to call a coward." This, of course, brought down the coveted applause from the gods, and we hope the actor was satisfied. His colleague, Mr. Graham, was a tall gentleman of good presence, but a terrible ranter, and although a good elocutionist in level passages, he "tore his passion to tatters, to very rags." Each had their admirers, particularly in the regions aloft. There was the Graham faction and the Pitt faction, who shouted each other hoarse at the fall of the curtain, until the slain heroes, who had just expired a few moments previously, reappeared, looking quite robust, though somewhat blown and scant of breath. It is somewhat singular that the four tragedians who had played together, and succeeded each other within a few years—Brooke, Butler, Pitt, and Graham—all died in the very prime of life.

The best feature of the performances during the first few seasons of the new theatre was the acting of Mr. W. Davidge. This was superb. Davidge, whose chief role was that of old men, was scarcely qualified by nature to play polished old gentlemen like Lord Ogleby, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Harcourt Courtley, and such like, but his Grandfather Whitehead, Lord Duberley, in *The Heir-at-Law*, and Old Rapid, in *The Cure for the Heart-ache*, were masterpieces, and his Shaksperian characters, Polonius, Touchstone, Autolycus, and others, were excellent. As Malvolio he made quite a hit, and Mr. Percy painted an excellent portrait of him in that character. But the best of all Davidge's performances were the mock characters in Planche's extravaganzas. These were almost unapproachable, and, although less demonstrative, were quite as amusing as the mock heroics of Mr. George Honey and Mr. F. Dewar, the best burlesque actors of the present day. Davidge's soliloquies, in which he appeared to think aloud, apparently totally unaware of the presence of the audience, were wonderfully absurd, and the way in which, as Ali Baba, the woodcutter, in *Open Sesame*, he sang a parody of "Woodman, spare that Tree," strutting up and down the stage before the footlights, between each verse, with a most lack-a-daisical expression of countenance, in imitation of a popular tenor of the day, literally convulsed the house with laughter, including the musicians in the orchestra. Davidge, who was said to resemble Munden, was a humourist off the stage as well as on it. Like Madame Malibran, who on one occasion told her manager, Mr. Alfred Bunn, that if he would give her a glass of porter, she would sing in such a style as she had never been heard to do, and fulfilled her promise, Mr. Davidge relished a draught of stout. Being fatigued after an arduous part, he one evening sent for a mug of porter, but no sooner did it pass his lips than he put it down again and, pulling a wry face, exclaimed in piteous tones—"God forgive him, he calls it porter." After performing in London for a season or two, Mr. Davidge went to America, and has occupied a conspicuous position as a comedian in the principal cities of the United States for many years past. A friend of ours met him in New York, a short time since, looking almost as hearty as he used to do, and in the course of conversation about Alabama claims and other disputes, Davidge quietly remarked, "There is one thing which the Americans never forgive. They never forgive an actor for growing old."

Planche's extravaganzas, *The Forty Thieves*, *The Fair One with the Golden Locks*, *The Invisible Prince*, and A'Beckett's *Yellow Dwarf*, were the most enjoyable pieces brought out in the early years of the Theatre Royal. The company, however, never recovered the prestige which it obtained during Roxby's management, and gradually the Star system was revived, commencing with Taglioni and Flora Fabbri, the dancers, and followed up by the engagement of Mr. Macready, the Keans, Miss Fanny Kemble, the Vandenhoffs, and others. From this time reliance upon the stock company was abandoned, and although numerous other actors and actresses of great merit have appeared as members of it during successive seasons, and of some of whom we may have to speak, the capacities of the company as a whole, have never again reached the standard which was aimed at under Roxby, and achieved.

THE AMERICAN SNOB.

EVERY nation, and indeed every community, has its own peculiar form of vulgarity; and American snobdom exhibits the same energetic, persevering, quaint and original genius that its countrymen display in all their nobler efforts. Our cousins say they have inaugurated a new civilisation. They have certainly developed a new variety of the snob. Nothing can check his innocence or soften down his offensiveness. Unfortunately, too, he is not content to remain at home, but is determined to show himself to the eyes of Europe. We find the American gentleman very like all other gentlemen. His speech and train of thought often betray his country; but as he comes abroad to see the world and learn charity, and expects to find our manners and customs somewhat different to his own, he neither stares nor comments, but studies to understand the principles they embody, and their fitness to European life and thought. He spends his money with prudence and sense; takes home such mementos as befit a man of taste, and is a better citizen in having become a wiser man. But the American snob is the reverse of all this. He glories in expressing his contempt for everything European, especially English. Nothing is fit to eat, the sun never shines, he sits down when we sing God save the Queen, and as for livery, pomp, parade, and all that sort of thing, he feels it a duty to bawl aloud whenever it offends his unaccustomed eyes.

The birth-place of the American snob may be in any part of the Republic, but the chances are that New York, or some southern or western city, is his present residence. As to his position, he may be a minister, whose health has got into such a peculiar state, that it required European air, at the expense of the congregation or some rich member of it, for its restoration. He is rushing over the ground as fast as possible, writing letters home to one of the deacons, to be read at the prayer meetings, and is taking notes for future lectures to village Lyceums. Armour-plated with his own sectarian conceit, he is described, in language he often quotes but never understands, as "Seeing he sees not, and hearing he hears not." Or, not unlikely, his father cultivated a market garden near some city which, in the days of the son, has overlopped it, and made him a man of some means. This person generally tells you that he is one of the old aristocracy of the said town. New York abounds in such. Or, it may be, he was a farmer's son, too lazy to work; and, having displayed a genius for cheating his schoolfellows in throwing jack-knives, and swapping such trumpery things as boys delight in, a reckless disregard for the truth, and a gushing spirit of country dandyism, was regarded by the parents, who should have thrashed all this nonsense out of him, as having an aptitude for trade, and a soul for genteel life Accordingly, after grubbing in the village

store, he develops into the city counter-jumper; and, by one of those miracles we sometimes see performed on behalf of one in a hundred of this class, he does not starve, as was to be expected, but, in time, becomes a successful salesman to those western and southern traders who make their pilgrimages to the American Babel, to purchase dry goods, and have a taste of its iniquities. By a logic peculiar to the American trade, because he can get rid of merchandise by hanging on to a customer like a leech, and never losing sight of him, however high he may mount, or low he may descend, he is too often considered a fit person to buy what he has only the art of selling in his own market; and, becoming in his turn a purchaser, he is very apt to expect the performance, with a change of characters, of the little comedy with which he is so familiar. John Bull can be a great snob if he likes, but he cannot become a panderer; and so he gives two-and-a-half per cent. dinners, whereby he hooks his fish without exactly soiling his fingers.

The conservatism which surrounds men at home has, up to his leaving it, kept the counter-jumper in as much order as is possible in a New York hotel life, but the moment he starts on his travels even that is abandoned, and he develops into the most objectionable of bipeds. Everywhere he bounces and swells, and flings about his unconscious rudeness. One amusing evidence of his having the true puppy blood is, that if you notice him in a friendly way, he elevates his nose and looks down on you with lofty disdain; but let him discover that you avoid him, and he fawns on you until you have to apply the boot. But we shall attempt no description of him. No pen, save that of the great American satirist, the Reverend Petroleum Volcano Nasby, is equal to the task. The other members of the American snob tribe are fellows who have "struck ile," "made a pile" in California, had a government contract during the war, been in the New York city government and got a job, and so forth. Seeing nothing in European life but its outward forms, and getting no idea of it beyond its parade and show, although we hear nothing but expressions of contempt for all this, his European experience has developed in him nothing but a desire to imitate European life; and he returns home to ape it with such unmeaning extravagance that he more than confirms his better countrymen in their republican simplicity. You see the young woman, who assured you that when she was in England she "snickered right out" when she saw the Lord Mayor's show, and could not understand the use of liveries, dash past you in a carriage and pair, with coachman and footman. The whole affair is bedecked and bespangled to the last degree, and her dress is the extravagance of fashion. Seated by her side is a dissipated and cheap-looking young man, got up like a dandy brilliant maker or music hall singer. The two are wriggling and giggling, and showing off what they consider aristocratic dress and manners. They have got about as near to the dress as did Artemus Ward when he purchased a swell suit in Commercial Road, which Moses assured him had been made for a nobleman; and the manners are entirely their own. These are the young people. Visit the elder ones at their houses—if they do not live at an hotel—and you will find them to be in no sense homes. Like a Broadway store, the whole thing is got up for a show; and is set out in the style of an Oldham Street window dresser, with a lot of unmatched trumpery, which they have been persuaded to purchase as choice works of art; while the walls are loaded with such pictures as housepainters get up in their leisure for art-treasure unions. Over the stuff that kills at forty, your host, whose political ideas are as crude and of no more weight with his countrymen than those of the boy in the street of whom you buy a newspaper, tells you he never meddles in politics, and that no American gentleman ever does! If, in your charity, you mildly suggest that in some things he has not caught the true tone, he annihilates you with the innocent assurance that he knows he somewhat differs, and that he has adopted a style of his own,—which statements you cannot doubt.

The last farce enacted by the American snob is an attempt to ape Ritualism. What sacerdotalism is he has not the remotest idea, save that he has somehow or other got it into his head that it is genteel. To have an altar and burn candles on it, to call the minister a priest, and see him dressed in gorgeous raiment, instead of the customary sober broadcloth of the American pulpit, is giving style to what is only commonplace and dull. And, as for genuflections, has it not been a cardinal doctrine with him ever since he first flourished a yard-stick, that it was the central act of true politeness, and the outward embodiment of all gentility? So then, if he has the altar, the candles—real wax candles—and the vestments, and he genuflects, what more can any one expect? Alas! poor snob. Ritualism is but the outward and formal expression of what the sacerdotalist regards as a vital doctrine; and is concentrated in a devout adoration, by him, of the assumed spiritual presence of the body and blood invoked into the elements of bread and wine by sacerdotal power. And you must not convulse us with your burlesque of what are to him sacred things. In the February number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, a writer, evidently a Ritualist, describes the indecent bosh which the clergyman and congregation of St. Alban's, New York, make of his chosen mode of worship. After saying that "Father Morril purports to be the humble exponent of Ritualistic practices" in that city, he continues, but, "There is a general insufficiency of services at his church, culminating in a large body of imported communicants at the High Celebration. Why do many of the congregation insist in making genuflections to the altar, when there is nothing on it to which to genuflect? Perhaps they have never had the true meaning and object of a genuflection explained to them. Again, a large number of the congregation remain seated during some of the most solemn portions of the Eucharistic service, and leave the church before the consummation of the remaining elements and the ablution of the sacred vessels. If Father Morril's congregation accept the sacramental doctrines of the Holy Eucharist, they are guilty of great irreverence by such actions as these. If they do not, the sooner Ritual is discontinued in that church the better; for without the acceptance of these doctrines it is a mere meaningless mummery." A Ritualistic missionary is certainly needed in New York, but let him spend neither his time or his patience on the heathen of St. Alban's. They are clearly transatlantic snobs of the genuine type, and probably have as little regard for his religion, as they have for any other. If, however, he should be bold enough to undertake their conversion, he will soon discover the meaning of Nasby's statement, that "a Yankee unrestrained by grace, is pizin."

ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

[The following verses were supplied to a Young Ladies' Boarding School, where there is a large admixture of English and Irish. On the feast of St. Patrick the English girls entertain their Irish co-students at a "muffin-worry," as our Snigbruck friends call it, and offer up appropriate songs.]

When the world is in trouble with questions depressing,
And the times, as says Shakspeare, are all "out of joint,"
There is just one bright spot of greenness refreshing,
'Tis the Imirald Oisle of "potato and point."

We in England may groan under taxes and snobbery,
And America fight about colour of skin:
There's a place that knows nothing of riot and jobbery;
The land of Saint Patrick and—Brian O'Lynn.

Dear land of Shillelaghs! in history's pages,
Your light shines as brightly as ever it shone:
Your ladies have lighted with joy all the ages,
You gave us Saint Bridget and—Widow Malone.

The bulls of ould Oireland the famed bulls of Bashan
Eclipse altogether: and noblest by far,
Of all the proud war-cries that rally a nation,
Stand out: Faugh-a-Ballagh and Erin-go-Bragh.

So we come to salute you, macushlas! mavourneens!
Poor Saxon young girls of the island of fogs:
And join you in paying a tribute, savourneens,
To the noble Saint Patrick who banished the frogs.

May your Imirald Oisle keep as green as its peasants,
And your hearts bare of troubles as they are of clothes;
Accept our good wishes and—eat up our presents;
An' long life and good luck to the "Mac's and the O's."

FISH AND BRAINS.—Professor Agassiz is of opinion that fish as food feeds the brain, is a restorative of weakened cerebral functions, and adds to the intellectual powers generally.

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

WE shall have novelty, if we have nothing better, at the Manchester theatres during the next few months. After the run of Boucicault's *After Dark*, produced this evening at the Theatre Royal, Miss Bateman will fulfil a fortnight's engagement, commencing on the 19th of April. Miss Bateman will be succeeded by Mr. and Mrs. Bandmann (*née* Milicent Palmer). In the course of a week or two Mr. Phelps will appear at the Prince's Theatre in Mr. Halliday's new play, *The King o' Scots*, founded on Sir W. Scott's tale, *The Fortunes of Nigel*. Mr. Phelps will be supported by other London actors, who performed in the drama when it was produced at Drury Lane. An itinerant company of London actors, with Mr. F. Younge, who has an arrangement with Mr. T. W. Robertson to produce his comedies in the provinces, will appear in May, and bring out the new play of *School*, now running at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, in London. We understand that there is a probability of Herr Formes playing the part of Shylock, in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, at the Prince's Theatre, and that Mr. Burnand and a few burlesque actresses will shortly appear in Manchester.

The superiority of Manchester to London in the affairs of the street is, we are sorry to see, gradually being done away with. We have noticed with displeasure several specimens of the Cockney cab making their miserable appearance in our streets; and now we observe with indignant astonishment the establishment of a system which is in effect an infringement upon the Mancestrian constitution. Our municipal authorities always took (and deserved) credit for the cleanliness of our streets. Their peculiar jurisdiction is being usurped by the abomination of *crossing-sweepers!* What man in a moment of madness has conceived this barbarous idea? Is he an official? Then let him be pensioned off without delay, or he will turn the street-lamps off and put up tallow-candles. This is a revolutionary age; but please let us finish reforming what is wrong, before we begin reforming what is right. Crossing-sweepers are the pest of London. They are nothing less than a plague. Locusts could not be worse. Crossing-sweeping is nothing but legitimatised mendicancy, and an encouragement of the popular crime of almsgiving-in-the-street. We are sorry indeed, and ashamed, that a ragged-school can be found so false to its mission—so blind to its own objects—as to include mendicancy in its course of education. To abolish toll-bars and establish crossing-sweepers, is the grossest piece of municipal inconsistency the new year can show. We hope we shall not have occasion to refer again to this manifest absurdity.

In recent assize cases we observe the curious phenomenon of a man having recovered a verdict in a case of breach of promise of marriage. We are sorry to see a member of the male race so disgrace it. Women have in all ages regarded marriage as a mercantile transaction. They are completely lost to shame, and it is useless to argue with them. But when we find a man no more ashamed than women, one cannot resist the opportunity of alluding to the subject, and expressing one's contempt of the law upon it. That one person should be able to get money from another person for that other person's refusal to compel the first to pass his or her life in the closest intimacy with one who hasn't the slightest affection for him or her, but perhaps a good deal of aversion—is a disgrace to modern uncivilisation. Engagements ought to be made and broken off far oftener than they are, and actions for breaches of promise of marriage are iniquitous institutions.

The rapid extension of building in the town and suburbs, within the last few years, is extraordinary. Large blocks of handsome buildings have been erected, extending from the neighbourhood of Bank Top, London Road, to the other side of Deansgate. The streets in and around Peter Street are being rapidly converted from low hovels into piles of capacious and imposing warehouses. Portland Street will soon be entirely rebuilt, while the neighbourhood of Shudehill is undergoing a similar metamorphosis. The increase of dwelling houses in the suburbs is equally great, and a continuous line of residences extends from Prestwich on one side to Didsbury and Stretford on the other. The other approaches to the town have extended equally. Rapid progress is being made with the new Exchange, and by means of the steam engines and cranes reared on the stupendous scaffolding, and with the aid of other mechanical appliances, the contractor is enabled to save a great deal of manual labour; whole gangs of hod-men are dispensed with, and their labour turned into other channels. Considerable progress is being made with the foundations of the new Town Hall. Considering the complaints which have been made about business for the last few years, and the gloom and depression which hangs over the staple trade of Lancashire, it is surprising that such an outlay of capital should have occurred, and it is difficult to trace the connection between cause and effect.

The *Times* appears disposed to try the system of having a native-born correspondent in every country. It has long had an United States-man, at Philadelphia, whose letters are the very perfection of journalism—journalism practised almost as a fine art, though without any special grace of style. Since the commencement of the year it has been trying how a Parisian will answer for the French correspondence. These letters, to distinguish them from the ordinary Parisian intelligence (a mere hash of current news), are headed "French Politics," and they are written, we believe, by no less distinguished a journalist than M. Prevost Paradol. The style is admirable. You see at once that the writing is the writing of a literary artist, who knows the secret springs of government in France, and wields over his materials a mastery such as only unrivalled knowledge can give. Momentous though silent changes are taking place in French society and French political life. Let those who would comprehend them read the *Times'* letters. The experiment could not have been tried at a more opportune time.

In a recent number of *All the Year Round*—which has changed its appearance from that of the neatest to that of the most detestably vulgar of all the magazines—there appeared the truest and most admirable description of the London Alhambra we have read. If it was not by Mr. Dickens himself, it was in the best Dickens' style—and is indeed ascribed, we believe correctly, to Mr. Charles Dickens, junior. The author boldly stripped the paint off the deathshead, and showed the shame of such a place being the most popular amusement in London, and paying a dividend of twenty-five per cent. to its champagne-breakfasted shareholders—roundly rating the newspapers (*Times* included) for their shameful puffs about good management and spirited proprietorship—and calling the attention of the police to their perfect authority to put the extinguisher on the well-conducted Pandemonium. We wonder whether any of our readers hold shares in that glittering palace, and how many reputable husbands and respectable fathers of families do the same. Twenty-five per cent. covers a multitude of sins, but this place holds an uncoverable multitude. Let them read Mr. Dickens's article, and, if that is not sufficient, let them go and see the vice, and theft and shame they batten on. Also, let our police peruse the paper, and see if they don't know a few establishments to which its advice can with advantage be applied.

A compensation case, at the last Manchester assizes, against the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, in which the plaintiff recovered £4,000, dead against the very best medical testimony obtainable, is another striking example of the admirable working of that bulwark of British liberty—Trial by Jury.

We have been much delighted at the fate which befel one Major Arbuthnott, who was, on February the 10th, engaged in the manly sport of charging at a female panther, which had just been let out of a trap-door for the gallant major and his gallant friends to attempt to spear. The manly major's unmanly horse appears to have objected to the manly sport, and stopped short in its charge; whereupon the panther seized the gallant major, and we are glad to be able to say, hurt the manly sportsman severely, and broke his gallant nose. This is the most agreeable piece of Indian news we have heard for some time. It serves to show us that, after all, nature has her eye upon us, and

sometimes suffers people to meet with their deserts. If any manly sportsman demurs to our delight, and says it is perfectly proper that brutes should be set upon and maimed, if not killed—we accept his dictum; and it is in accordance with it that we rejoice at Major Arbuthnott's discomfiture. We hope he will not recover too rapidly, but may have plenty of time to quietly reflect on the sweet qualities of manly cowardice; and in any event, that he will carry to his grave the stigma of his righteously broken nose.

We are happy to notice that a certain highly-coloured face which we recently remarked upon, has almost totally disappeared from our photograph-shop windows. This readiness to take a hint shows the possession of some sense and taste by our print-sellers. But objectionable as is the photograph of Miss Grey, that of Miss Lee is not less so.

ON THE RIALTO.

THE PRESTON STRIKE.

SINCE the *Sphinx* last paid a visit to our Exchange things have gone—to use an expressive but vulgar phrase—"ever longer and worse." "That remarkable vegetable product of a warm latitude which forms the basis of our textile operations," as the great Boshley calls cotton, has steadily risen, and what has been a gain to the few has hastened the ruin of the many. Hardly a day has passed without some rumoured, or accomplished, commercial catastrophe. The remorseless jaws of insolvency have been swallowing up great and little among traders of all descriptions, and the insatiate monster still cries, like the horse leech, "Give, give." Unfortunately the victims have not been random speculators of the "heads I win, tails you lose" character; but steady, plodding, honourable, industrious men, who have stood against dear cotton and a losing trade till they could endure it no longer. The accumulations of a thrifty lifetime have been sapped away; and if the dead have power to know aught of the course of living events, and having that power, care to take an interest in what goes on in the Empire of King Simpson, not a few dead and buried cotton magnates must be turning in their graves over the ruin and disaster that has overtaken their once-flourishing establishments, must be groaning over the destitution of their widows and orphans. The battle-field is strewn with honest bodies, and not with collapsed trade windbags and baffled gamblers, over whose disasters the humbug-hating *Sphinx* would chuckle.

The state of trade was, a few weeks ago, the one topic of talk on the Rialto. But it has gone beyond talking now. The permanent market report of unalleviated loss is written on the faces of its subscribers. Past cares have ploughed wrinkles into what, a few years ago, were cheerful faces; and, if the contemptible shame of grey hairs so prevailing now-a-days were to spread over the Exchange, the supply of Mrs. Allen's much bepuffed specific would be wholly inadequate to the demand. You shall walk for hours about our Rialto and not see one face that has any bloom upon it, that smacks of fresh air, a light heart, a sound digestion, and the enjoyment of the blessed gift of sleep. Were some Lancashire Ichabod Crane to be suddenly dropped in its midst from a year's doze in Sleepy Hollow, he would fancy he had stumbled upon an annual meeting of Associated Gravediggers and Mutes; he would never dream that in those forlorn-looking faces and mouldy figures he saw the brisk Manchester agent, or the irrepressible Country Manufacturer. The delicate and refined banter of Snigbruck is hushed—the expletives of Owdham are subdued into a groan—and the Bowton Trotter has fallen into a spiritless jog. To find physiognomical parallels to the faces on 'Change, you must go to a row of charity children during sermon on a July Sunday, or to a party spending a "genteel evening," or to the audience at a comic music hall. For the trade has fully discovered that there is not a chink in the future through which a ray of hope can steal. They have realised what the *Sphinx* has always preached, that without cheap cotton there is no hope for the trade, and cheap cotton seems as far off as—as national retrenchment, commencing at the top of the tree, among the high-salaried swells who don't work for their wages, instead of at the bottom, among the ill-paid clerks who do.

And, as a vagrant or a hopeless tramp, seeing before him a dreary stretch of straight macadam, turns aside with avidity into any little bye-way or field-path that, lead where it may, is at any rate a change; so the members of the Rialto abandon in their talk the great course of trade events and rush into the interlude of the Preston Strike.

Many and various are the opinions about this movement: about the wisdom of the reduction on the masters' part, the wisdom of the resistance on the part of the operatives, about the chances of success on the one side or the other. Among the many interested and passionate voices, surely that of the disinterested and passionless *Sphinx* may find a hearing.

There can be no doubt that, viewed as a curative measure, the proposed reduction of 10 per cent. in wages has no value whatsoever. As a measure to restore an equilibrium between cost price and rates obtainable, it will have as much effect as the Chamber of Commerce has upon public opinion. In a state of business such as obtains at present, the Merchant is absolutely master of the situation; and there is not the slightest doubt that producers will deduct the lower rate of wages from the cost, and take the same rate of loss out of pocket they are taking now. If the spinners spun and the weavers wove for nothing, as long as the spinners and manufacturers produce what the world will not have at anything like the cost price, any advantage gained by the producer will be only temporary. The pressure of the times will make all again equal losers on a lower level. As a remedy for the existing state of affairs, a reduction is no more effective than a man's having his hair cut would be to a mortified leg. The only effect it can have is this: that more mills can be kept at work with ten per cent. less wages, at the same ratio of loss, than at present prices, as every reduction of price will increase consumption.

But there is another point of view in which the reduction is defensible and sound. It is not right that the whole of the onus of the crisis should be flung on the masters, and the hands have no share. During the cotton famine the masters bore their losses—frightful as they were—unassisted, uncommiserated, and unrewarded. The whole nation rose to succour and assist the hands. But, now that the famine is chronic, it is only fair that the burden should be divided. If you take the matter on a politico-economical basis that profit and loss have nothing to do with wages, but that supply and demand should alone regulate them, the masters, in view of the enormous number of closed concerns from one reason or another, have a perfect right to put it to the test whether the labour supply does not exceed the demand sufficiently to establish a fall in its price. If, on the other hand, you take the point of view finding favour with the operatives, that wages should oscillate with profits, then, if that nostrum is to be other than an unjust farce, surely the hands ought to take their share of the loss, as they will be eager enough to demand a share of better times, if better times should ever come. Hence we think the masters are acting fairly and wisely in seeking to lower the rate of wages during the present terrible depression.

One very painful query, however, forces itself upon us:

How is it that the masters can so quickly and so effectively bind themselves together to reduce wages, which are a mere episode in their tragic position, and cannot in any way coalesce for short time, which is a cure?

As to the policy of the operatives in resisting this reduction by a strike, there can be but one opinion, out of their own body. It is sheer midsummer madness, indefensible as a matter of expediency or of right. They allege that they cannot live on the proposed reduction. But surely "half a loaf is better than no bread," and to no bread they must assuredly come if their employers be firm. Poor creatures! there is something absolutely touching in the gallant manner in which they rush into forlorn hopes. They always strike at the wrong time. A wise poet says:

> Priests and parsons have long tongues,
> King and princes have long arms,
> And the people have—*long ears.*

And certainly this is true of the operatives, and they are led by the same long ears into quagmires of suffering and distress. We well remember the last great Preston strike of 1853. The proud town feels its effects to this day, and it ended in signal defeat of the working classes. They struck for an advance, and, after using up their union funds, pawning their last rag, and running into hopeless debt; after weeks of famine, and of premature deaths equal to a small campaign, they had to succumb. This was merely a mistake as to time. During the panic of 1847-8 wages had been reduced, and when its recoil set in, in 1850-1-2, in very flourishing business, a return to the old standard, or even a higher one, was natural and obtainable. In those three years producers coined money—perhaps not so rapidly in Preston, but certainly in the neighbouring Blackburn district. But the men whom the poor operatives paid to look after their interests had not the wit to see this. Men who in 1848 were cutlookers and tacklers, towards the close of 1852 were in possession of large concerns, mansions began to be built, and folks who a few years ago had toddled in the dim morning to the clanging of the six o'clock bell, rattled along in carriages. Nay, even people who had shaved for a penny were seen the triumphant possessors of the commercial "brush." The operatives began to open their eyes, and said, "We have had no share in this," and struck for a share. But when they struck the golden harvest was over. In the autumn of 1853 there came a fall—profits melted away, and the precise time selected for a strike was just when the masters could afford to close their mills on their late accumulations, and when the state of trade offered no inducement to increase the cost of production. We well remember seeing, in the winter of 1853-4, a knot of some half-dozen women clad in the scantiest apparel, almost destitute of underclothing, with their thin print dresses flapping round them like flags about a flag-pole on a damp day, accompanied by as many men, with pinched cheeks, blue lips, and feeble, spindly-looking legs, singing in concert, in tremulous, thin voices, to the tune of "Good-bye, Uncle Ned," in the time of the Old Hundredth:

> Then we'se put by the reed-hook and the comb;
> And we'se hang up the shuttle by the loom;
> And we'se never be content
> Till we get the ten per cent,
> In spite of their 'let well alone.'

The words were valiant, but there was despair and capitulation in every wretched note. We do not want to see the like again, but unless some sheer infatuation seize the masters, or a sudden burst of reason break upon the hands, see it we shall. For if ever there was a time when masters ought, could, would, or should close their mills, this is that time. And if the operatives waste their funds, their spirits, their powers of endurance now, they will have nothing to fall back upon to enforce better remuneration when all Lancashire is at work again. As a mere matter of expediency, the strike of the hands is bad. If they would accept the proffered wage, and save as much out of it as possible, so as to place themselves in a strong position, they might depend upon it that, when the cotton trade shall be again profitable, they would be masters of the situation. The circumstances of the trade do not warrant more than two-thirds of the available operatives being employed, and therefore the price of their labour ought to fall. But the hands repudiate the political-economical view of the case. Their idea is, that they ought to be paid according to the return capital is receiving. Now, it is notorious—palpable even to the eyes of the workpeople themselves—that capital is not only not making any profit at all, but is itself fast ceasing to exist. In another year a capitalist spinner or manufacturer will be almost as rare as the Dodo. When found he will have to be put under a glass, duly labelled, and deposited in the British Museum.

Now, from the hands' own point of view, what ought they to do in such a crisis? Surely they ought to say to their employers: During the American war the nation aided us, and left you alone; many of you crippled yourselves by running your mills to feed us; we all thought it a mere temporary difficulty; we now find it likely to last some time, and we will meet you and take our fair share of the bad times, relying fully upon you to recompense us when the good time coming is really come.

We have always had a sympathy with the operatives' refusal to accept hard politico-economical laws, and their love of a more romantic and Christian code. But the merit of hard, clearly-defined laws is, that you know what to expect; but if chivalry is inconsistent and one-sided, it is mere knavery.

Who will succeed? If the masters are firm, they must succeed. But, judging by their past, one would be inclined to credit them with any folly; and that they may prove traitorous one to another, when victory is within their grasp, is quite possible. That the operatives will yield without a struggle, we dare not anticipate. They have an heroic power of endurance—they are led by quacks, they have little education, and they have—"long ears."

NEW LANCASHIRE M.P.'s IN PARLIAMENT.

The new M.P.'s who hail from Lancashire seem determined not to let the grass grow beneath their feet. Mr. Charley (Salford) has made about half a dozen speeches since Parliament met, and seems to have made himself quite as much at home in the House, as he did in Greengate and Chapel-street. If he has as much success with the old women in the House as he had with those in Salford, he will accomplish wonders. Mr. Rathbone (Liverpool) made a successful debut, and spoke upon the registration of voters. Alderman Pochin (Stafford) made a paradoxical speech in defence of adulterated food. Mr. David Chadwick (Macclesfield) has spoken on the ballot, and not very successfully. Mr. Assheton Cross (S. W. Lancashire) took part in the debate on the Irish Church. His friends say that he made a very effective speech, and his opponents assert that it was a failure. We leave our readers to judge for themselves. Finally, Mr. J. S. Henry (S. E. Lancashire) made his debut by asking a question, and a rather foolish one. He asked Mr. Gladstone about the Fenians, and a wild speech of somebody at Cork, but he gained nothing by his motion, and reminded us of the old saying, "He that looks at the moon, lights on the midden!" The country now waits with impatience for the utterance of the Members for Drogheda and Stalybridge.

Bernal Osborne, whose hand in the matter of jokes was against every man, and who never sacrificed a point to friendship, once said that Mr. Walpole's style of speech reminded him of a hearse horse, which was high-stepping but mournful.

THE CLUBS OF MANCHESTER.

THE CONSERVATIVE.

THE Conservative Club is situated, as all the Manchester world has known since last July, in St. James' Square; and St. James' Square is situated behind Miss Boardman's shop, or, at least, what was Miss Boardman's shop until lately. True, there is another and considerably wider entrance to the Square from John Dalton Street; but the narrow passage, by the shop aforesaid, is the short cut from the fashionable part of our city, and the usual means of access. An abominable passage it is, and one requiring some nerve, and no nose at all, to traverse; but the male population will put up with a great deal for the sake of a direct road to anywhere, and none but males ever enter St. James' Square. Why, we know not, unless it be from the absence of all shops, and the constant and awful presence of the Bishop. The male frequenters of the Square, again, may be divided into three classes, viz., visitors to the Diocesan Registry, mostly clergymen from the country in their best clothes, and the whitest of all white neck-ties; secondly, members of the legal profession, with all their belongings—their tail of clerks and boys supernaturally sharp from early contact with the Law; and thirdly, the eight hundred gentlemen, speaking in round numbers, who belong to the Manchester Conservative Club.

There is something in a name, after all. We can imagine the pride with which a young Tory dates his letters from "The Conservative Club, Manchester," but when "St. James' Square" is added, the title becomes actually oppressive in its grandeur. Surely some genius of mischief—a very Puck for wanton absurdity—must have been by the side of our civic Adams, when they gave names so big to streets and places so insignificant! Piccadilly and Oxford Street are titles pretentious but allowable, especially the former, but who could help a blush when introducing a cockney to St. James' Square? while, oh, ye powers of bathos! what shall be said for our Manchester Pall Mall?* Nevertheless, St. James' Square sounds exceedingly well: it is dignified, aristocratic, and——yes, and Conservative altogether.

Church and State! The club flourishes under the very eye of the Bishop, figuratively beneath the very shadow of his office walls. The country rector can recruit himself, after an episcopal interview, by simply walking across the Square and through the opposite door. A wash, a good dinner, a moderate glass of wine, and he is a new man, ready to take back quite a cheery report to his anxious wife and bairns:—"Really, my dears, on the whole, I think his Lordship quite fell in with my views. His language was a little ambiguous, it is true, but——" but the soothing influence of the Conservative Club makes the worthy man see everything *couleur de rose*, for that evening at all events. There really should be a club opposite every Diocesan Registry.

The Manchester Conservative Club is fair and white outside. A three-storied building with an extra half-story, all glass in front, growing, so to speak, out of the roof. This curious excrescence belongs to the kitchen. The cooking is carried on at the very top of the house, thereby keeping the rooms and passages below free from all kitchen odours and heat. On either side the entrance to the club are two botanical curiosities in pots. Judging from the atmosphere they have to stand, and the way they seem to stand it, these four plants are the staunchest Conservatives about the place. Passing between them, we enter a narrow hall, furnished principally with brass hooks for the members' hats and coats. These hooks, each with its separate number affixed, line the walls to the third story, along passage and staircase. In the entrance-hall, moreover, are boards for notices, letter-racks, play-bills, and other programmes for the evening's amusement; also there is stationed here a man-servant in livery, to keep watch, we presume, over the hats and coats, receive messages and letters, and guard the threshold from the profane world outside. We peep through an open door-way into the Strangers' Room. Surely too small to accommodate more than one stranger at a time, and presenting no feature of interest to detain even that one any longer than is absolutely necessary. Indeed, when we looked, there sat within it a small boy with an expression of the most intense misery on his face which we have ever seen on boy, small or big. Beyond this door-way is the Lavatory, clean, tolerably spacious, and admirably fitted up. Here we cleanse and adjust our outer man, and then proceed upstairs to the Reading Room. It is dinner time, and we are hungry; so, after a cursory glance round the newly-painted walls, which sadly want some pictures or other ornament (the whole room, indeed, has an empty look, although well supplied with papers and magazines), we mount again another story, to the Dining Room overhead. We are under the charge of a hospitable member of the Club. Any member, it appears, can introduce a friend. To judge from the crowded state of the Dining Room during our visit, this rule, good as it is, will become a nuisance, should the Club increase in numbers.

The Dining Room is the same size as the Reading Room below. It is lighted by two series of windows; one series looking out on the Square, the other on an inner court, covered with a glass roof, and into which open various offices. In each of this last series of windows is hung a basket of creeping plants. There are floral decorations, too, on the dining-tables—little bouquets of such flowers as can be procured at a reasonable rate during the month of March. We notice, with shuddering remembrances of other Manchester restaurants, the wholesome freshness and perfect ventilation of the room, its order and cleanliness, and the efficiency of the waiters. These waiters apparently belong to three different tribes. There are boys in buttons, gorgeous creatures in livery, and ordinary beings in the black dress-coat and clerical tie of common (hotel) life. Our host explains that the "pages" and men in livery form the regular staff, and remain on duty in the establishment from morning to night, while the birds of plainer plumage take wing after a certain hour, and return not until dinner-time next day. Being in a critical humour, and having to wait a necessary minute or two for our dinner, we remark, as in the case of the Reading Room, that the walls look very bare. Half-a-dozen lists of members, and a few notices, are not very cheerful or satisfactory ornaments; while, as to the one solitary picture which the room possesses, we trust from the fact of its not being hung up, but standing on the mantelshelf, propt against the wall, that it is only exhibited temporarily as a curiosity. It purports to be a representation of a Conservative banquet held in the Free Trade Hall in 1867. This much we gather at intervals during our dinner, by dint of much guess-work and deep reflection. More than this we dare not say. The painting, and of course the painter, are quite beyond criticism. The comfort of a dinner depends almost as much upon the way it is served up, as on the actual quality and cooking of the eatables. In the former respect, especially, our dinner at the Conservative Club is a decided success. Napkins and silver fish-knives, for instance, though not of much moment, are things to be noticed and returned thanks for, at a public dining table in Manchester. We do both. We repeat that our dinner is a success. True it is that the bill of fare, out of which we have had to choose, contains nothing extraordinary, the only novelty (to us) being a certain hodge-podge of vegetables, browned and very good, surnamed *Kailcannon*, but we doubt not that great things could be done in the Conservative kitchen, if occasion required. Tories are always bon-vivants, and Tory cooks the best of their race.

On the same floor as the Dining Room, we are shown certain pantries, and servants' quarters, also the Steward's Room, which, although comfortably furnished and cosy enough, must surely be close and unhealthy, from the fact that its only window looks out on the covered court before-mentioned. Wise in their day and generation have been the managers of the Club in their choice of steward. He has been for some years a messman in the army, and *must*, therefore know how to cater well both in solids and liquids. Through his courtesy we are taken upstairs again, to the Kitchen at the top of the house. More space is wanted, and about to be obtained, for this department. So our guide explains, and we fully agree with him, that a considerable enlargement is desirable. We only wonder how so much good eating can be procured from so small a room; and, after standing a few moments in the heated and odorous atmosphere, watching the dexterous evolutions of the cooks, who are so crowded together that it is a marvel they can cook at all, we are glad to retire from the Kitchen, with a feeling of thankfulness that it is situated above the Dining Room and not below it. At least, we should be thankful, if it fell to our lot to dine regularly at the Club. A peep into the Card and Billiard

*The other day we were fortunate enough to come across "Hyde Park Corner," in a dirty street between the Adelphi and Greengate, Salford.

Rooms, which are also in the top story, and we have made the tour of the establishment. In the Card Room we see no cards, but plenty of smoke. The Billiard Room seems almost as well patronised as the Dining Room below. So far as couches and other fittings go, this region of smoke and play is decidedly the most comfortable part of the Club.

The Club was opened in July last year. There are nearly eight hundred members on the books, and the numbers are increasing. Both the entrance fee and annual subscription seem extremely moderate. On the whole, we came away feeling that there are more inducements now for a man to turn Conservative than there were before last summer.

SUNDAY EVENING WITH THE SECULARISTS.

GLANCING down the first column of the daily paper, which each Saturday announces the services of the various Christian sects for the coming day, we have frequently noted one of a character opposite to the rest, headed "Secularism," and which invites its readers to the discussion of subjects of a decidedly anti-christian nature. To the orthodox we imagine this little paragraph must seem much like a plant of deadly nightshade in a garden of spiritual flowers. There is an impression among steady church-going people and the like, that a secular institute is a school

> Where blind and naked ignorance
> Delivers brawling judgments unashamed.

on all things that are held most sacred by ordinary humanity.

Pariahs among religious people are these secularists, waifs and strays of atheists, deists, freethinkers and doubting spirits of all kinds, forming a combination of human atoms, diverse in their belief, or rather non-belief, and only united in one common ground of antagonism to Christianity. Discarding alike the hopes and fears which belong to the faiths of mankind, they stand alone, with no belief save such as is centred in themselves, and evolved from their moral consciousness. Prompted by curiosity to see what manner of men these are who, to use Mr. Carlyle's phrase, dwell in the EVERLASTING NO, we directed our steps one Sunday Evening, to the temple of freethought. We found it in an upper room in Grosvenor Street, reached, after traversing a passage lighted by a friendly lamp, by a steep narrow staircase. Not a very inviting place is this which, by necessity or choice, the secularists have chosen for their deliberations. Devoted by those who use it on Sunday evenings, to threading the bewildering mazes of philosophical thought, on ordinary days it is used in the service of Terpsichore, as some of its furniture bears evidence. A glance at the interior is not prepossessing. Faded dinginess of tawdry drapery, melancholy statues and busts, with wretched trumpery of paper flowers and wreaths, violoncellos and other orchestral instruments lying mute and shelved, benches of the most primitive and uncomfortable kind, with a shabby fine chandelier in the centre of the ceiling, make up a general effect, which if the theory of the influence of outward circumstances be correct, is anything but favourable to æsthetical enjoyment. At one end of the room is a piano, by the aid of which the musical part of the proceedings (we were going to say service) is conducted. Near to it, for the use of chairman and lecturer, is a table, upon which were displayed for sale, various specimens of secularist literature, together with photographic portraits of Mr. Bradlaugh, the late Mr. Ernest Jones, and others. On the walls were advertisments of the *National Reformer*, and the works of Iconoclast.

On entering the room a few minutes before the time announced for the commencement of the proceedings, we found near a hundred persons present, the numbers of which were augmented during the evening until the place was inconveniently full. For the most part, those present seemed to be of the respectable artisan class, with a small sprinkling of females, apparently wives or sweethearts of those who accompanied them. Though one occasionally meets with a female freethinker of the masculine type of mind, like Harriet Martineau, it is very difficult to imagine what charms the cold and icy region of the Everlasting No can have for average specimens of the gentler sex. The faces of the men seemed to indicate shrewd, argumentative minds, though there were many which wore a somewhat vacant puzzle-brained expression, but in this particular the secularist congregation does not materially differ from many others. The time intervening before the lecture was employed in brisk conversation, or in the perusal of Mr. Bradlaugh's paper, which was handed about the room for sale. A chairman being appointed, the audience joined in singing a hymn in praise of benevolence. We took the opportunity of examining the secular hymn book, and found that its contents were devoted mainly to the laudation of human virtues, among the rest we recognized an abbreviated copy of Mr. Tennyson's poem, "Ring out wild Bells" from *In Memoriam*. The hymn concluded, the chairman with a few prefatory remarks introduced the lecturer, and announced the subject for discussion to be, "Secular justice versus Christian charity."

The lecturer, who essayed to deal with this ambiguously stated subject, who spoke fluently with a cockney accent, but who displayed a painful ignorance of English grammar, commenced his discourse by reading some disconnected notes from Mr. Holyoake's works regarding secularism and its relation to humanity. He had not proceeded far before it was evident that he had misapprehended the terms of his subject, and had no very clear notion of the ideas he intended to convey to his hearers. The lecture from first to last was a thing of shreds and patches, a medley of tangled talk and purposeless rhetoric. Social, political, and religious problems were heaped together in the most inextricable confusion, until it became well nigh impossible to trace any silver cord of argument in the perplexed web of thought. As far as we could make out the lecturer seemed to have a vague notion that all the evils in the land were in somehow traceable to Christianity, and that secularism and secular justice (whatever that might mean) was the Morrison's pill for curing the maladies of society. One thing was certain, the poor were the slaves of the rich, and were debarred from equal rights. The aristocracies of land and capital ground the faces of the poor; these wealthy men called themselves Christians, and based their conduct on Christian ethics. The case was therefore plain—Christianity was at the root of the mischief. Christian charity (strangely interpreted into meaning Christian almsgiving) threw its insufficient doles to starving paupers, hoping thereby to atone for manifold sins. What the secularists wanted was free-trade in land, education, political freedom, a new arrangement of the relations of men to each other, and the cure would be accomplished. In such fashion did the lecturer talk, at a length which it is unnecessary for us to follow. He was evidently burdened with the consciousness that the time was out of joint, and that the secularist's code of moral ethics was the one thing needed to set it right, and bring about the golden age when men should do right, not from fear of punishment or hope of reward, but for virtue's sake. The idea that Christianity had been the stumbling-block in the way of the world's progress was adhered to with such remarkable pertinacity as almost to provoke a smile, when it led to the expression of belief that, if the civilizations of Greece and Rome had been allowed to go on developing without its hindrance, society would now have been in a nobler and better condition. But though one may smile at the confused logic by which such results are obtained, and perhaps may think that irrelevant remarks, dogmatically expressed, upon questions regarding the relations of Christian or moral ethics to political economy, may be in some measure mischievous, yet there is a serious side to this matter. Earnest, humble, and reverent search after the truth in any direction, though it should lead to Lucretian doubt and darkness, must always command respect, and, if he be sincere, there is a sort of Spartan heroism about a man who does right because it is right, heedless of consequences, and without hope of reward hereafter. As regards the young man to whom we listened, there were evidences that his mind was shallow, flippant, and, in some respects, offensive in its tone.

At the close of the discourse, a sharp discussion followed, in which the lecturer got severely handled by speakers professing Unitarianism, Deism, and Christianity. It was evident, too, that even to some of his own class the sophistry of his arguments and his bad logic were apparent. A fair field and no favour was allowed in the debate, the chairman throughout the proceedings acting with strict impartiality to all the disputants. We did not stay to hear the reply of the lecturer, but made our way down the narrow staircase into the street, thinking, as we went, of the soliloquy of that quaint old philosopher, Sandy Mackaye, after hearing Mr. Windrush's Emersonion sermon to an audience of a similar character to the one we had left:—"A hunder sects or so in the land o' Gret Britain; an' a hunder or so single preachers, each man to a sect of his ain! an' this the last fashion! last indeed! The moon of Calvinism is far gone in the fourth quarter, when it's come to the like of that. Truly, the soul-saving business is a'thegither fa'n to a low ebb, as Master Tammas (Carlyle) says somewhere!"

MANCHESTER ARTISTS IN LONDON.

A LARGE number of our local artists have contributed to this year's Water Colour Exhibition at the Dudley Gallery. The *Spectator* thus notices some of their works :—There is a great deal of clever expression in Mr. Muckley's "Village School;" and by Mr. Joseph Knight's "Breton Peasants returning from a Fair," with weary men and women trudging home under their poor weak umbrellas through the driving rain, we are invited to moralize on the fleeting nature of human amusements. This last picture is a bit of good manly work. Mr. C. Livett, who once gave fair promise of excellence, has come to a standstill (if no worse). Mr. C. Potter's "Wintry Day, Langdale," with the Pikes under snow, is finely conceived, and would be a notable picture in any gallery. Amongst the figure-pieces are a few of great merit. "On the Mussel Banks," by Mr. Arthur Marsh, is a single figure with sea-shore background. A fisher-girl, in weather-faded and trade-soiled garments, carries a basket-load of mussels on her arm. The action is natural, the colour sober but full and harmonious, the painting forcible, and the general effect real. The work denotes an advance towards completeness over Mr. Marsh's last year's picture of the helmsman in a storm, which was itself remarkable for its vigorous and unaffected expression and somewhat rugged execution. Mr. Marsh's style indicates a leaning towards French example, not necessarily reprehensible, but to be controlled lest it should lead to mannerism.

The *Illustrated News* speaks of some Italian Views by Mr. Binyon as "noteworthy;" of Mr. A. H. Marsh's Fisher-girl as "a vigorously relieved figure;" of Mr. Joseph Knight's Breton Peasants as "a quaint but clever drawing;" and of Mr. Muckley's Golden Hours as "pretty though over-elaborated."

HENRY THOREAU.—The last time we saw that noble and remarkable man, Henry Thoreau, he came quietly into the study of a famous scholar, to get a volume of Pliny's Letters. Expecting to see no one, and accustomed to attend without distraction to the business in hand, he was as quietly going out, when the host spoke to him, and without surprise, and with a cool, erect courtesy, Thoreau greeted his friends. He seated himself, maintaining the same habitual erect posture, which made it seem impossible that he could ever lounge or slouch, and which made Hawthorne speak of him as "cast-iron," and immediately began to talk in the strain so familiar to his friends. It was a staccato style of speech, every word coming separately and distinctly, as if preserving the same cool isolation in the sentence that the speaker did in society; but the words were singularly apt and choice, and Thoreau had always something to say. His knowledge was original. He was a fine-ear and a sharp-eye in the woods; and he added to his knowledge the wisdom of the most ancient times and of the best literature. His manner and matter both reproved trifling, but in the most impersonal manner. It was like the reproof of the statue of a god. There seemed never to be any loosening of the intellectnal tension, and a call from Thoreau in the highest sense "meant business."—*Harper's Magazine.*

THE MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—I am fortunate, or unfortunate enough, to have a boy at the Grammar School who I have been induced to keep there much longer than I can conveniently afford, in the hope of his obtaining a scholarship, or one of those government appointments now open to public competition, and who I think shows a good disposition for work, and brings home an average number of prizes. I must, however, confess to grave doubts of his success in competition with boys of other schools, who are kept well to work, instead of being allowed to play at it as my boy appears to be doing. His hours of attendance at school are as follows:—

	Mornings.	Afternoons.
Mondays.....	9 to 12	no attendance.
Tuesdays	9 to 12	3-20 to 4.
Wednesdays	9 to 12	no attendance.
Thursdays	9 to 12	do.
Fridays.....	10-30 to 12	2-30 to 4.
Saturdays	11 to 12	no attendance.

thus giving only 17½ working hours per week, without deducting the time spent in the gymnasium, and in other amusements of which I hear a great deal, for a boy rising 18. It is said, I believe, that the old plan of long hours and continuous work was bad, and that under the present system the scholars are supposed to continue their studies at home, but there is never any regular work given them to do in out-of-school hours, except to make a few notes of the morning's proceedings, which is done at the utmost in half-an-hour, and it is too much to expect that average boys between 16 and 20 will work unless it is imperative on them to finish some task set before them; the consequence is, that the spare time, if not occupied in play or walking the streets, is spent in some desultory kind of reading which is of little or no service. In my time boys commenced school at 6-30 or 7 p.m., and had to work hard of an evening to prepare the lessons for the next day, and although that might have been rather too much, there is such a vast difference between the 53 hours a week of that time and the 17½ of the present, that one may be excused for doubting if the present extreme is the most advantageous. In finding fault with a school where the education is gratuitous, I may be met with the observation that "one must not look a gift horse in the mouth," but surely the masters have some duties to perform in return for a not very scanty pay, and they could with much advantage devote more of their time and attention to their pupils without much injury to themselves, or exceeding the average working hours. Not knowing how otherwise to redress this grievance, I have ventured to request the insertion of this in your journal, feeling assured that you will agree that parents who, like myself, have to make an effort to keep their children at the school, and cannot afford to pay the masters for private tuition, are entitled to a little consideration from the school authorities. ZIXO.

Manchester, *March*, 1869.

THE COMIC SONG OF THE PERIOD.—Music hall songs have reached the lowest depth of vulgarity. Here is the refrain of a song very popular in these places of amusement in London :—

Jamsetjee ma jabajehoy
Jabbery dobie Porie,
Ikey, Pikey, Sikey, Crikey,
Chillingowullabadorie!

FAULTS AND VICES.—*Le Siècle* says that two young women were talking of their husbands. "How," asked one, "do you let your husband smoke at home, in your apartments?" "Certainly, by that means he passes the evenings with me." "What a price!" "My dear," replied the lady with the smoking husband, "a woman of spirit makes use of her husband's faults in order to repress his vices."

BIRTHPLACE OF MONTGOMERY, THE POET. The property in Halfway, Irvine, comprising the house in which James Montgomery, "the Christian poet," was born, and the Moravian Chapel in which his father preached, has been brought to public sale, and bought for the Irvine Burns Club, the members of which had some time ago expressed a desire to secure the buildings and maintain them in good repair.

NOTES FROM FROUDE'S ADDRESS.

Mr. J. Anthony Froude, the historian, the new rector of the University of St. Andrew's, in Scotland, delivered an address to the students of the university last week. From it the following passages are taken:—

THE SCOTCH CHARACTER.

We will consider the stock-in-trade—the moral and mental furniture—with which you will start upon your journey. In the first place, you are Scots; you come of a fine stock, and much will be expected of you. If we except the Athenians and the Jews, no people so few in number have scored so deep a mark in the world's history as you have done; no people have a juster right to be proud of their blood. I suppose if any of you were asked whether he would prefer to be the son of a Scotch peasant or to be the heir of an Indian rajah, with twenty lacs of rupees, he would not hesitate about his answer; we should none of us object to the rupees, but I doubt if the Scot ever breathed who would have sold his birthright for them. Well, then, *Noblesse oblige;* all blood is noble here, and a noble life should go along with it. It is not for nothing that you here and we in England come, both of us, of our respective races; we inherit honourable traditions and memories; we inherit qualities, inherent in our bone and blood, which have been earned for us, no thanks to ourselves, by twenty generations of ancestors: our fortunes are now linked together for good and evil, never more to be divided. But when we examine our several contributions to the common stock, the account is more in your favour than ours. More than once you saved English Protestantism; you may have to save it again, for all that I know, at the rate at which our English parsons are now running. You gave us the Stuarts, but you helped us to get rid of them. Even now you are teaching us what, unless we saw it before our eyes, no Englishman would believe to be possible, that a member of Parliament can be elected without bribery. For shrewdness of head, thoroughgoing completeness, contempt of compromise, and moral backbone, no people were ever started into life more generously provided. You did not make these things. It takes many generations to breed high qualities either of mind or body; but you have them; they are a fine capital to commence business with, and, as I have said, *Noblesse oblige.*

ECCLESIASTICISM AND MORALITY.

We have had thirty years of unexampled clerical activity among us; the churches have been doubled: theological books, magazines, reviews, and newspapers have been poured out by the hundreds of thousands; while by the side of it there has sprung up an equally astonishing development of moral dishonesty. From the great houses in the City of London to the village grocer, the commercial life of England has been saturated with fraud. So deeply has it gone that a strictly honest tradesman can hardly hold his ground against competition. You can no longer trust that any article that you buy is the thing which it pretends to be. We have false weights, false measures, cheating and shoddy everywhere. Yet the clergy have seen all this grow up in absolute indifference; and the great question which at this moment is agitating the Church of England is the colour of the ecclesiastical petticoats.

THE REWARDS OF LITERATURE.

Only by accident is a work of genius immediately popular in the sense of being widely bought. No collected edition of Shakespeare's plays was demanded in Shakespeare's life. Milton received £5. for *Paradise Lost*. The distilled essence of the thought of Bishop Butler, the greatest prelate that the English Church ever produced, fills a moderate-sized octavo volume; Spinoza's works, including his surviving letters, fill but three; and, though they have revolutionized the philosophy of Europe, have no attractions for the multitude. A really great man has to create the taste with which he is to be enjoyed. There are splendid exceptions of merit eagerly recognized and early rewarded—our honoured English laureate, for instance, Alfred Tennyson, or our own countryman, Thomas Carlyle. Yet even Tennyson waited through ten years of depreciation before poems which are now on every one's lips passed into a second edition. Carlyle, whose transcendent powers were welcomed in their infancy by Goethe, who long years ago was recognized by statesmen and thinkers in both hemispheres as the most remarkable of living men, if success be measured by what has been paid him for his services, stands far below your Belgravian novelist. A hundred years hence, perhaps, people at large will begin to understand how vast a man has been among you. If you make literature a trade to live by, you will be tempted always to take your talents to the most profitable market; and the most profitable market will be no assurance to you that you are making a noble or even a worthy use of them. Better a thousand times, if your object is to advance your position in life, that you should choose some other calling of which making money is the legitimate aim, and where your success will vary as the goodness of your work; better for yourselves, for your consciences, for your own souls, as we used to say, and for the world we live in. Therefore, I say, if any of you choose this mode of spending your existence, choose it deliberately, with a full knowledge of what you are doing. Reconcile yourselves to the condition of the old scholars. Make up your minds to be poor; care only for what is true, and right, and good. On these conditions you may add something real to the intellectual stock of mankind, and mankind in return may perhaps give you bread enough to live upon, though bread extremely thinly spread with butter.

TRUTH AND JUSTICE INDEPENDENT OF OPINION.

Whether we are Radicals or Conservatives, we require to be often reminded that truth or falsehood, justice and injustice, are no creatures of our own belief. We cannot make true things false or false things true by choosing to think them so. We cannot vote right into wrong or wrong into right. The eternal truths and rights of things exist, fortunately, independent of our thoughts or wishes, fixed as mathematics, inherent in the nature of man and the world. They are no more to be trifled with than gravitation. If we discover and obey them, it is well with us; but that is all we can do. You can no more make a social regulation work well which is not just, than you can make water run up-hill. Be honest with yourselves, whatever the temptation; say nothing to others that you do not think, and play no tricks with your own minds. Of all the evil spirits abroad at this hour in the world, humbug is the most dangerous.

This, above all. To your own selves be true,
And it will follow, as the night the day,
You cannot then be false to any man.

THE ONLY GENUINE SOURCES OF LAUGHTER.—Amongst the many things of which "demand" raises the price, because it increases the competition while failing to cause any economy in the modes of manufacture, the raw product itself being absolutely limited in quantity, is fun. The number of comic journals which make us more melancholy than the most dismal sermons, increases year by year, though their names are always varying, because each in turn which fails to draw to it any perennial supply of humour or wit, goes out like a will o' the wisp almost as soon as it is seen. The truth is that people are apt to forget that there are two and only two genuine sources of laughter,—playfulness of heart, so far as it is really genuine,—and that much deeper faculty of the true wit or humourist, which is often in fact rooted in the most sombre temperament—one having a keen apprehension of the deepest intellectual or moral incongruities of life, and the art of grouping them in the most striking and sudden contrasts.—*Spectator*.

"HOMES" OF THE POOR IN MANCHESTER.

Dr. J. E. Morgan, M.A., has republished a valuable essay on *Town Life Among the Poorest*, read before the British Medical Association at Oxford last year. Efforts have recently been made by the Medical Officer of Health in Manchester, and other authorities, to induce a belief that the high death rate of Manchester is chiefly, if not solely, due to an excess of infant mortality, caused by the careless or culpable habits of the poor. The *Sphinx* writers have always consistently maintained that the chief cause is to be found in the wretched dwellings in which the bulk of the poorer inhabitants are compelled to herd; and hence their persistent advocacy of the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwelling Bill, which, it will be remembered, was so obstinately opposed by the corporation and town clerk of Manchester. In support of our views—which have not yet obtained the recognition of our local authorities—we have pleasure in quoting the following remarks from Dr. Morgan's able and exhaustive essay:—

What may be the number of our poorer fellow-townsmen who are, at the present time, doomed to live in a class of dwellings which, by reason of their actual construction or surroundings, are altogether unfitted to serve as human habitations? In attempting to answer this question we shall at the same time supply some information respecting the amount of improved house accommodation which is needed in our towns. Unfortunately, the data for such an inquiry, if not altogether wanting, are still sufficiently scanty. I have already shown that in Salford, with its population of 100,000 inhabitants, there are sixty streets or groups of streets, in which death is so frequent an intruder that the great majority of their tenements must either be razed to the ground or altogether remodelled, if health and strength are once more to revisit the inmates. I have before remarked that the number of persons residing in these streets and courts cannot fall short of 25,000; and if it be assumed that the building reforms which I would desire to see carried out, be undertaken upon a sufficiently extended scale to provide accommodation for about 20,000 of these persons, we certainly shall not overestimate the requirements of the town. Although, in the case of Manchester, no statistics bearing specially upon the rate of mortality in the more neglected districts have as yet been compiled, we still find among the buildings the same contempt for arrangement and order, and equally confused masses of courts and alleys; and inasmuch as the death-rate for the whole city is considerably higher than that of Salford, we are justified in inferring that the number of poorer citizens who need habitable houses would be proportionately greater, amounting, on a rough calculation, to about 80,000 persons.

These results are, to some extent, borne out by the figures given in two reports of the Manchester Statistical Society on poor and densely populated districts situated in Ancoats and Deansgate, in which it is stated that upwards of 23 per cent. of the whole of the families residing in these two quarters of Manchester, where, at the time they were visited, huddled together in single chambers, which, in some instances, contained as many as six or seven persons, who were thus living under conditions destructive to health.

I have insisted that in the all important question of overcrowding, the last twenty years have not witnessed any signs of improvement; indeed, viewing the town as a whole, the evil is probably greater in the present day than at any previous time of our history. This is a result to which a variety of circumstances have more or less contributed. During the last quarter of a century, a vast number of the dwellings of the poorer classes have been razed to the ground, in order that railways, gasworks, manufactures, and other concerns of great public utility, might be allowed space for extending their operations. The families by which those dwellings were occupied have been driven from their homes, and forced to put up with still more straitened accommodation. Householders have thus been converted into lodgers, lodgers into the occupants of a single room. In this manner the pressure on the constantly narrowing space has year by year grown more urgent; while at the same time the light has become more dim, and the air more tainted with impurities

A new class of buildings also has of late arisen in our towns. In former days the more densely peopled quarters were, as indeed they still are, mapped out into blocks; within these blocks, in courts and alleys and in dismal cellars, lived the poor. Houses of a better class, the abodes of merchants, professional men, and shopkeepers, looked out upon the main streets, and formed an outer facing. These were the men who, by their education and influence, were able to watch over the interests of their poorer neighbours. They have now forsaken their town houses and ceased to regard them as dwelling places, having removed with their families to brighter neighbourhoods, while, at the same time, huge piles of warehouses and offices are massed around the humbler dwellings, proving effectual barriers to those much needed currents of air on which health and vigour so largely depend.

R. WALMSLEY, JEWELLER AND SILVERSMITH, Manufacturer of LEVER & CHRONOMETER WATCHES, 129, Oldham-st., Manchester.

The late Mr. Keeley, the comedian, died worth £30,000.

In the course of conversation at a Literary Club, allusion was made to a member more remarkable for brilliance than principle; given to borrowing money, but above the weakness of returning it. "And yet," said a miserly old member, "I once lent him ten pounds, and he returned it." "Never!" exclaimed one of the listeners, "you—once—lenta man—ten pounds? Why, this is history!" "Not the 'history that repeats itself,' at all events," was the old member's quiet rejoinder.

PENMAKING IN SCOTLAND.—Printing and its allied trades constitute the staple industry of Edinburgh. No fewer than five thousand persons find employment in the various branches. Among these, penmaking occupies a prominent place, and Edinburgh can now claim a position in this department equal if not superior to that long occupied exclusively by Birmingham. The chief manufacturers are Messrs. Macniven and Cameron, whose Owl, Waverley, and Dickens pens have achieved a deservedly high reputation for their uniform excellence, and their adaptation to the various kinds of handwriting.

SYDNEY SMITH MEETS HIS MATCH.—At a Foundling Hospital dinner in London, Sydney Smith met with a retort that he was never tired of repeating afterwards. He was talking in a half-bantering way, with a Swiss gentleman of education connected with his country's embassy at the Court of St. James, upon the relative merits of Swiss and English soldiers, and urged the superiority of the English, inasmuch as *they* fought for *honour*, while the Swiss fought for *money*." The fact is," answered the Swiss gentleman, "*we each of us fight for what each most wants.*"

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

[The following list of books, published during the last week or ten days, does not comprise works of a technical, sectional, or merely professional character.]

	s.	d.
Bamberger (L.), Count Bismarck, a Political Biography	3	6
Blackmore (R. D.), Laura Doone; a Story of Exmoor, 3 vols.	31	6
Boutell (C.), Arms and Armour in Antiquity and the Middle Ages	7	6
Brooks (Shirley), Aspen Court	2	6
Champneys (W. W.), Things New and Old—Sermons	3	6
D'Aubigné (Merle), History of the Reformation, vol. 5	16	6
Dumas (A.), Chicot the Jester	1	0
Froude (J. A.), Inaugural Address to the University of St. Andrew's	2	6
Gardiner (S.R.), Prince Charles and the Spanish Marriage	30	0
Glen (W. C.), Law relating to Public Health and Local Government	30	0
Hamilton (J.), Arthur's Seat; or, the Church of the Banned	6	0
Kean (Edmund), Life of, by F. W. Hawkins, 2 vols.	30	0
Leland (C. G.), Hans Breitmann's Ballads	1	0
Martineau (J.), The New Affinities of Faith	1	0
Mill (J.), Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind, 2 vols.	28	0
Palgrave (Reginald), The House of Commons, its History and Practice	4	6
Parowne (J. S.), B.D., Immortality; Halsean Lectures, for 1868	7	6
Reade and Boucicault, Foul Play	5	0
Reade's (Charles), Griffith Gaunt	5	0
Taylor's (B.), Byways of Europe, 2 vols.	16	0
Thompson (W.), Principles of the Distribution of Wealth	10	6
Townsend (G. H.), Handbook of the Year 1868	12	6
Trench (Archbishop), Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount	10	6
Tytler (S.), Girlhood and Womanhood	5	0
Ward (A. W.), The House of Austria during the Thirty Years' War	2	6

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor should be addressed to the *Sphinx* Office, 37, Oxford Street, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

Business communications and advertisements should be addressed to Messrs. J. G. KERSHAW & Co., "Main" Printing Offices, 37, Oxford-st, Manchester.

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